

Using behavioral science to improve pet licensing retention

"The Innovation & Performance team provided the capacity and expertise to get more value from our data. We want this trial to be the first of many data-driven approaches we take to improve the work of the Animal Shelter"

- Kara Main-Hester, Deputy Director

THE NEED

The Seattle Animal Shelter ("SAS") provides life-saving services to animals in need across the City. To do this work SAS relies upon revenues from the licensing of domestic pets. Despite being mandated by the Seattle Municipal Code, only 60% of the c.3,000 licenses that expire each month are renewed, even accounting for those households that move out of the city.

OUR APPROACH

Innovation & Performance ("IP") worked with SAS to identify and quantify the non-renewal issue, to use behavioral science to redesign licensing renewals, and run a low-cost randomized control trial ("RCT") to evaluate the impact of these changes.

IP provided analytic capacity to extract measures from the transactional licensing database and worked with the team to design and implement the RCT. IP then conducted analysis of the redesigned communication's operational and financial impact.

THE RESULTS

- **Rapid collection of robust results.** Taking advantage of regular mail-out cycles, simple randomization across two license reminder mailings allowed the generation of robust results as to what works in licensing renewal. Trial run at zero cost to SAS,
- **Real improvements of an operational issue.** Analysis of trial results showed significant increase in renewal rates among target group of license holders, and an increased proportion of expiring licenses being replaced by longer-term licenses. A switch to the redesigned license reminder will deliver c.\$650k in future licensing revenue to the shelter.
- **Unlock insights from transactional database.** IP team brought data expertise and capacity to extract insights from a transactional licensing database that had proved challenging in the past. IP is committed to supporting departments to get more value from existing datasets.

OUR ROLE

Functional Capabilities

- Project management
- Data analysis
- Low-cost evaluation

Specialized skillsets

- Behavioral science
- Evaluation design
- Statistical analysis

DEPARTMENT PARTNER

Seattle Animal Shelter ("SAS") within Finance and Administrative Services

PROJECT DURATION

November 2017 - February 2018

IMPACT

Increased renewal rates among two-year license holders by 9% and uptake of two-year licenses by 11%, delivering \$650k in value

KEY DEPARTMENT CONTACTS

- Kara Main-Hester (deputy director)
- Arlene Ehrlich
- Stephanie Renaud

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

- Richard Todd (IP)